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Along Highway and Byway: Annual Meeting of Federation

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THE LINACRE QUARTERLY

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NO. 2

ALONG HIGHWAY AND BYWAY

ANNUAL MEETING OF FEDERATION

The Catholic Physicians' Guild of New Orleans has suggested that there be an annual round-table discussion of interesting topics by members and representatives of Guilds from different sections of the country, and that this plan be initiated with a luncheon and meeting during the Convention of the American Medical Association in Atlantic City, the second week of June.

The officers of the Federation heartily approve of this idea and have asked the New Orleans Guild to sponsor such a gathering and arrange the program, the Federation officers cooperating.

Many of our Catholic physicians, some of whom are very active in the House of Delegates and on committees, regularly attend the A. M. A. Convention, hence a large and influential number may be expected at our meeting.

The Secretaries of the affiliated Guilds will receive details and will be requested to transmit this information to the members.

MEDICAL LECTURES TO MISSIONARIES

Under the Manhattan Guild notes of this number of the LINACRE appears an item of interest concerning a meeting of Guild doctors which took place at the Catholic Medical Mission Board, 10 West 17th Street on the evening of March 30. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Thomas W. Carey, President of the Manhattan Guild. The purpose of the meeting was to organize a summer course of forty

hours devoted to medical lectures for missionaries working in foreign fields. Courses of this kind have been given during July at the Mission Board in recent years. Usually there are about fifteen missionaries in attendance. As Father E. F. Garesche of the Mission Board explained, some of these missionaries, as in certain parts of China, will be located hundreds of miles away from a physician or a drug store. The great value of modern medicine, sanitation and hygiene in prevention and cure of disease is unknown to the natives in these remote fields. The missionaries find such knowledge of the utmost use to them in their work, and are therefore anxious to learn all they can in the relatively short time devoted to these lectures. The lectures are given by doctors of the New York City Guilds. Each lecturer selects from the wide field of his own specialty topics that may be most helpful to the mission workers. Most of the missionaries are priests, but there are also usually some brothers and nuns present. They bring to the work excellently trained minds, and are therefore well equipped to learn much from the doctors for application in their labor devoted entirely to God in the foreign missions.

PSYCHOLOGY REVEALS FRAUD

In this issue of LINACRE Walter G. Summers, S.J., Head of the Department of Psychology of the Graduate School of Fordham University, has described briefly an instrument, a psycho-galvanometer, devised by him for the detection of deception. The instrument records a permanent graph of characteristic changes in electrical potential induced by emotional states in any person being tested as to whether or not he is deliberately attempting to deceive the examiner. Hitherto the most successful device for lie detection has depended upon changes of blood pressure and respiration, which it records. As a result of careful experimental comparison of both methods Father Summers concludes that the electrical method gives much more accurate results. This electrical method of detecting deception has aroused widespread interest among psychologists, psychiatrists, judges and criminologists. The more fundamental the discovery, the wider and more varied its possibility of application. The new method offers scientific psychology a more objective basis for application in many fields.

For example, in psychiatry it may have many theoretical and practical uses. Father Summers finds that the instrument gives data for the detection of fraud in persons feigning hallucinations and delusions. It sheds light on many other problems, some of them mentioned by Father Summers in his paper. He proposes to develop by this new approach a method for determining the emotional adequacy of candidates for positions sought, and the possible differences of emotional

reactions in persons of diverse somatic and physiological types, as described by Kretchmer.

In forensic fields it would seem to present a simple, certain and humane means of ascertaining the truth and therefore of serving the ends of justice.

The author reports complete success in discriminating the guilty from accomplices, and guilt and complicity from innocence in persons charged in diverse places with many types of crime, as murder, assault, abduction, burglary and illegal entry. The instrument appears to offer a most valuable addition to the scientific methods utilized in criminal investigations. By finding out the truth more directly it may tend to replace more complicated, but less certain and less humane methods. If its general use bears out its promise as an instrument of truth finding, it may lead to revolutionary results in some fields where its employment may be indicated.

THE LEGAL ASPECT OF USE OF LIE DETECTOR

This issue of LINACRE contains also a discussion by Mr. William Harman Black, Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, on the legal aspects of using a lie detector for the investigation of the guilt or innocence of men accused of crime.

RECORDING GALVANOMETER

By WALTER G. SUMMERS, S.J.

Head of the Department of Psychology, Graduate School, Fordham University
(Read before the Yorkville Medical Society, January 27, 1937.)

THE present apparatus developed in the psychological laboratory at Fordham University resulted from our efforts to devise an instrument for the exact recording of human emotional variations. There is a long history of investigation of the nature and characteristics of the psycho-galvanometric reflex. Instruments for these investigations ranged all the way from the simplest type of galvanometer to the Einthoven string galvanometer. From the time of the early Greek physicians, it was known that emotional changes even of a minor character could be detected by changes in heart rate, pulse and respiratory changes. These methods were refined in more recent times by Marston, Larson and Keeler. In our early investigations we employed pressure and respiratory apparatus to discover that they were not adequate to record many important emotional changes which not only were introspectively and consistently reported by subjects, but were definitely recorded by electrical instrumentation.